



THE LIBERTY NATIONAL BANK
of Cedartown

50th. Anniversary

September 16, 1970

INTRODUCTION

On our 50th Anniversary, The Liberty National Bank proudly presents a series of drawings of historical scenes in Polk County, by Mr. Robert Redden.

The drawings are to be permanently displayed in the bank for viewing of the public.

This booklet has been prepared to enlighten you with some of the history of our county and to give you some of the background of the artist - - Mr. Redden.

We hope you will enjoy it as much as we have enjoyed preparing it for you.

First Reprint - March, 1994

ABOUT THE ARTIST . . .

ROBERT REDDEN

As a boy, not yet school-age, Robert Redden took a pen and watery ink and made his first drawing of a tea kettle he had seen in a catalogue. During the next six years he began to feel within himself a strong need to place on paper the things he saw and felt.

School seemed to him a waste of time. He felt he had learned enough of the three 'R's and ABC's. Much of his class time was devoted to drawing his favorite subject - - Indians. His sixth grade teachers sent notes home telling his parents he was wasting his time, that he knew what he wanted to do in life and that he was eager to begin. His mother worried over his lack of interest in school. "Mother, someday I'll do something to make you proud," he recalls saying.

Certainly, this compilation of drawings of Polk County scenes is just another example of the fulfillment of that promise.

With pen and ink Robert Redden will show you, if you will look with him, a fairyland of unending composition - - the abundant beauty around us - - - often unnoticed.

ABOUT THE DRAWINGS . . .

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH of Cedartown

This pen and ink drawing is of the second building to house Cedartown's First Baptist Church. This church was located on the west side of Main Street and extended back westward, taking in the present location of The Liberty National Bank.

The first building for the Baptist church was built at Tan Yard Branch in 1835. When it was established, there was a remarkable gathering of Negroes, Indians, and Whites under a bush arbor. The preacher came well-prepared--with his Holy Bible and his gun. The other men also came armed, lest trouble should break out amongst the varied gathering of people. That meeting under the bush arbor, with an armed preacher and armed congregation, was the beginning of the Baptist church in Cedartown.

A few years later as the settlers of the Valley became more prosperous, many families came and built beautiful homes. The little church at Tan Yard Branch was too small, so plans were made for a new one -- the one shown in the drawing. William West and Asa Prior each donated an acre of land for the building and the church grounds. A contract in the amount of \$1000 was let in 1845 for construction of the new building. The material used has heart-pine, painted pure white. The church had tall cathedral windows, large columns at the front, and inside was a commodius slave gallery. The building was used until 1889.

The following is an interesting excerpt from the centennial booklet of The First Baptist Church of Cedartown: "Preachers and citizens believed in the laws of our land, and often cases which now take weeks in courts, were tried out in church, and enemies have been known to kneel together at the altar of prayer, shake hands, join in a hymn of rejoicing and go back home friends forever. Such men as these were the builders of our country."

THE BIG SPRING

Volumes could be written about the Big Spring and the activities centered around it in years long past. Before the White man, both the Creek and Cherokee Indians lived here. The Big Spring was a favorite place for their dances ceremonies, and other festivities. To preserve its beauty, informants tell us that it was agreed to never place a fence around "Big Springs."

The spring still attracts many visitors each year, and provides Cedartown with an abundant supply of pure water. The flow is over 4 millions gallons daily.

THE OLD MILL

The "Old Mill" at Benedict was built in 1848 for Asa Prior, an early settler to the area. The structure survived the Civil War and is believed to be one of the oldest buildings standing in Polk County. It is said that many times the men would bring their families and picnic lunches to the mill because milling was an all day affair.

HIGHTOWER FALLS

This old landmark has slowly faded into the past, but its history reveals it as having been the location of a once thriving business. The falls, located near the Antioch community, once provided power for a grist mill and a factory where wool and cotton were carded. The rock building as seen in the drawing, was built by Elias Dorsey Hightower in about 1850. Parts of the building still stand near the falls.

In addition to being a center of commercial activity, this scenic area played another important part in early history of the county. Hightower Falls was a favorite spot for picnics, church socials, and other gatherings of people who wanted to get together with their friends and neighbors for a good time.

POLK COUNTY COURTHOUSE

This majestic structure, Polk County's third courthouse, was completed in 1889. The tall clock tower was a typical part of courthouses built during this era. In the early 1940's, the building was remodeled and the clock tower removed. The structure was razed in 1950 and the present courthouse was built on the site.

CEDARTOWN CITY HALL

The affairs of the City of Cedartown were carried on in this impressive building from its completion in 1901 until 1935 when the present City Hall was built. The building housed the equipment of the Cedartown Fire Department, a volunteer unit until 1943. Of course, the first fire wagons were horse-drawn as shown in the drawing.

MAIN STREET

This drawing shows Cedartown's Main Street as it appeared in the early part of the 20th century. The drawing was made from a photo taken around 1910. These were the "horse and buggy days," however a few local residents owned automobiles. The auto pictured is believed to belonged to a local doctor.

CEDARTOWN HIGH SCHOOL

This drawing depicts the Cedartown High School building, constructed in 1915-1916. The auditorium and four classrooms were added in 1935. There were twenty-one members of the first graduating class in 1917. The building was replaced in 1970 after the graduation of a class of 219.

THE LIBERTY NATIONAL BANK

The home of The Liberty National Bank for forty-three years, the exterior of this building was decorated with two large columns. The interior was dominated by enclosed "cages" occupied by the bank's tellers. First occupied by the bank in 1920, the structure was remodeled and used by the bank until 1963, at which time the new building on West Avenue was built.

THE SEABOARD DEPOT

In years gone by the railroads were a vital part of Cedartown's economy, and the train was a favorite means of transportation to the town's residents. This drawing of the old Seaboard Depot will help many people recall memories of past experiences when the train was in its heyday.

Besides its role in transportation, The Seaboard Depot was an important gathering place for many folk who liked to sit and discuss the issues of the times and to watch the trains pull in and out of the station. A favorite of the people to ride as well as to watch was the famous "Silver Comet." The train approaching the depot from a distance in the drawing is probably the "Silver Comet."

Although the building, shown in the drawing, was replaced in early 1970, many memories must surely live on. This drawing is presented in the interest of preserving some of these memories.